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Security Council

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5379th meeting

Thursday, 23 February 2006, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bolton	(United States of America)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mrs. Papadopoulou
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Bader
	Russian Federation	Mr. Denisov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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06-25109 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Brazil, Canada and Singapore, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Guéhenno to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and by His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

Mr. Guéhenno: Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address publicly the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping and the progress achieved to date to tackle it.

As I begin, I must say a few words of admiration for the efforts of His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, the Secretary-General's Adviser on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel. He has given us unflinching diplomatic and practical support on this issue. His involvement has been invaluable, and we are grateful for it. I also must highlight the exceptional leadership Assistant Secretary-General Jane Holl Lute has demonstrated this past year in galvanizing the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations system as a whole to deal with this problem more seriously than we ever have in the past.

Most of all, I express deep appreciation for the amount of time, energy and political attention that Member States have invested recently in seeking solutions to the problem. The troop-contributing countries especially deserve praise for engaging with the Secretariat and the membership at large on issues of extreme sensitivity and of great importance to their national honour. I stress the word "honour", because it has been earned at the cost of the lives of some of their finest uniformed personnel.

Security Council members know well that just some weeks ago three Jordanian soldiers died fighting gang members while helping to strengthen a central checkpoint on Haiti's most dangerous road. Not long before that a Canadian Royal Mounted Police officer was killed in an ambush while patrolling in Port-au-Prince. In the jungles of the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, eight Guatemalan special forces soldiers lost their lives in a firefight with a hateful militia group. A year ago this week nine of their

comrades from Bangladesh also fell in the line of duty in clashes with armed thugs.

Unfortunately, they are not alone. This is a dangerous business, claiming and threatening the lives of men and women from Peru to Pakistan, Ireland to India, Bolivia to Brazil. But despite the risks, day in and day out, United Nations personnel — civilians, military and police alike — from 120 countries get on with doing their jobs in tough conditions and at great personal sacrifice.

We dishonour those brave men and women when we fail to prevent or punish those from within their ranks who victimize the very people peacekeepers are meant to protect and serve. I am not so sure that this was fully understood a few years ago as clearly as it is today. Two years ago, prior to the revelation that a shockingly large number of United Nations peacekeepers had committed sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, neither we in DPKO nor Member States openly discussed or fully appreciated the magnitude of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping.

Today, not only is the severity of the problem openly recognized, but the General Assembly has adopted a comprehensive strategy to tackle it, building on the collective efforts of Prince Zeid, DPKO and the United Nations system at large. This strategy focuses on prevention and enforcement, and it will — upon approval by the General Assembly of a policy on victim assistance — incorporate remediation as well.

We have already made concrete and meaningful progress to implement that strategy. Before discussing this, though, I want to be clear up front that we still have a considerable way to go. It must be said that not all troop contingents or staff on the ground fully support — even after all the negative publicity and attention — aspects of the zero-tolerance policy, particularly as it pertains to prostitution. We will need to work together to address that point. We also need to strengthen markedly the capacity of peacekeeping operations and of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to investigate violations while respecting due process. Once we have overcome those hurdles, we expect to narrow significantly the continuing gap between zero tolerance and full compliance. Until then, as we even more aggressively seek out non-compliance, measured against a higher standard than ever before, the progress being made will not seem obvious, nor will it be enough.

Let me now refer to the progress that we have achieved. We are making headway in laying the foundations for the prevention of the problem in the longer term. Two years ago, we did not even have a uniform standard governing what is, and what is not, considered to be sexual exploitation and abuse. One can hardly prevent the problem if one cannot define it clearly and consistently. Today, we can. Thanks to the efforts of the General Assembly last year, all United Nations civilian staff members, military personnel, contingents, United Nations volunteers and contractors are bound by the same very strict standards outlined in the Secretary-General's prohibitions on sexual exploitation and abuse.

In the past, we did not do enough to promulgate, publicize and train personnel on whatever standards were on the books. Today, we most certainly do. Between 79 and 90 per cent of civilian police and military personnel receive mandatory training on sexual exploitation and abuse. Our aim is 100 per cent.

We have also developed tools to reinforce that training and its underlying message of the duty of care that every peacekeeper has to the people whom they are meant to help. DPKO has worked with an outside professional company to produce a film on the code of conduct for peacekeepers. It has been widely distributed in the field and translated into a dozen languages. I am pleased to report that it has been well received.

We have developed and are making use of other innovative tools and training materials to educate and inform personnel. They include an online e-learning standards of conduct module, pocket cards, mission-readiness booklets distributed to staff prior to deployment, security briefings and posters and brochures on sexual exploitation and abuse and human trafficking — prepared, I might add, in six languages — as well as other public information tools.

Our personnel are not the only people whom we are targeting with this material. We are sharing it with host populations as well. They have a right to know the standards we expect of our people. They are also often in a better position to know when our personnel are violating those high standards. We are now actively encouraging and making it easier for the local

population to bring breaches of conduct to our attention.

But prevention cannot be achieved through training, information and public outreach alone. Welfare is another important part of the equation, as armed forces throughout the world know all too well. This is especially true when uniformed personnel, as well as civilians, are deployed in quasi war-zones in the remotest parts of the world. Missions are now addressing that issue as a high priority. Most are now creating constructive recreational outlets, and several have even established, from existing resources, multipurpose sporting, socializing and dining facilities. Those are the types of initiatives included in our welfare strategy and standard operating procedures on welfare promulgated and sent to all heads of mission last month. In our discussions in the General Assembly, we will encourage troop-contributing countries to make use, in the mission area, of the welfare stipend paid by the Organization for every military peacekeeper. It is important that the issue of welfare and recreation be a priority, with a view to keeping soldiers busy when they are not on duty.

With regard to enforcement, we have also made some progress. During 2005, investigations have been completed into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving 296 peacekeeping personnel, the breakdown by category being 84 civilians, 21 police and 191 military. So far, 17 civilians, 16 police and 137 military personnel have been dismissed or repatriated. Those numbers include six commanders. For the past year, we had been making managers and commanders aware that they will be held accountable for those under their chain of command, and we mean it. We are in the process of making this accountability part of their performance evaluation. We have also sought and received the cooperation of two Member States in repatriating entire units for misconduct, in part related to sexual exploitation and abuse and in part related to other misconduct.

One of the major reasons why we have made significant headway in the areas of enforcement and prevention is that Member States have recently given us the means to ensure that professional experts are dedicated to the task full time. As recommended by the Zeid report and endorsed by the General Assembly, we have designed, recruited for and staffed a multi-disciplinary conduct and discipline team at DPKO Headquarters, in addition to eight conduct and discipline teams established in peacekeeping operations in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and Timor-Leste.

The conduct and discipline teams develop policy, provide oversight of disciplinary issues and ensure the coherent application of United Nations standards of conduct. In missions, the teams provide policy advice to heads of mission on discipline, receive allegations from complainants, collaborate with the Integrated Mission Training Centres and help the mission leadership maintain a watchful eye on all issues related to conduct and discipline. The field has largely welcomed that important tool in the arsenal to combat sexual exploitation and abuse as well as other forms of indiscipline.

In addition, the conduct and discipline teams are crucial in bringing the outreach to the host populations, to which I referred earlier. They have been active in making communities aware of the various methods — by telephone, e-mail or in person — through which complaints can be made in a confidential setting. In the middle of the year, we will formally launch a new comprehensive database to track and monitor all allegations. In the interim, we have implemented a file-sharing mechanism to report and store allegations securely and confidentially. We have developed a public information strategy and implementing procedure to guide missions in responding actively and transparently to local media and host populations on sexual exploitation and abuse issues.

The DPKO conduct and discipline teams rely heavily on an ever-growing collaboration in this area with OIOS — the investigating authority for sexual exploitation and abuse offences. OIOS is an essential partner and a central element of our comprehensive strategy with regard to those important issues, which is why DPKO requested OIOS to undertake a global audit on discipline, among many numerous other audits, to help us identify and fix the most difficult problems in the field. We need its help and expertise; we cannot possibly be aware of all potential wrongdoing occurring across the globe, in 18 missions, comprising over 85,000 people drawn from over 100 countries.

The specialized capacity of the OIOS helps ensure thoroughness in the handling and investigation of complaints, and it has established an investigative presence in six missions. But its hand must be

strengthened; currently, OIOS does not have all the resources to do the job that it is being asked to do.

Investigations in the field pose certain problems. While troop-contributing countries have been requested to coordinate with OIOS in a manner that satisfies the requirements of their national jurisdictions, not all Member States are comfortable with the investigative role given to OIOS by the General Assembly, and have reserved their rights with respect to their uniformed personnel on the ground. We must sort through that issue to ensure rapid, reliable means of determining the facts, preserving the rights of the victims and the accused and discharging justice fairly.

Those measures are what we have put in place together with our partners in the United Nations system, and we continue to develop those and other initiatives the areas of prevention and enforcement.

Under the heading of what might be termed remediation, we have made progress with our United Nations partners in developing a policy regarding support to victims. A United Nations-wide task force, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and DPKO, has overseen the preparation of that policy, on which there have been broad consultations over the past year, including several meetings with Members States. It is being transmitted to the Secretary-General this week for final discussions and forwarding to Member States, as requested in the Summit Outcome document.

The measures I have described are the beginning of a programme of systemic and sustained change. We have made significant progress. However, there is a great deal yet to be done and for that, as we will make clear in our discussions in the General Assembly, we need greater support from Member States.

We will urge Member States to adopt a revised memorandum of understanding to incorporate the standards of conduct contained in the Secretary-General's prohibitions. We will urge Member States to firmly endorse the creation of fully fledged conduct and discipline units at Headquarters and in the field, and to establish such units in missions that are not currently served by them. Those units, as I have explained, are an essential tool for preventing misconduct and monitoring compliance with United Nations standards.

We will urge Member States, including all troop-contributing countries, to send an uncompromising message against prostitution in peacekeeping missions. Indeed, today, the single measure that would do the most to reduce the level of allegations and strengthen the policy of zero tolerance against sexual exploitation and abuse is if all troop contingents had an active and effective policy against all prostitution in mission areas.

We will appeal to Member States not to conflate the issues of procurement procedures being stretched by honest peacekeepers trying to get a job done with financial fraud and with sexual exploitation and abuse. It is one thing for auditors — and I happen to be an auditor by training — to disagree about whether financial loss to the Organization has occurred because a field manager chose to use mission aircraft to fly rations to troops when fuel supplies in a country were unexpectedly cut off and left a contractor unable to deliver them; it is another matter altogether when procurement officials deliberately defraud the Organization. But let me stress that, regardless of any divergence of views on methodology and accounting for loss, DPKO takes all OIOS findings and recommendations very seriously and is addressing the weaknesses identified in peacekeeping procurement in the same comprehensive, professional and sustained manner with which we have addressed the sexual exploitation and abuse issue over the past 18 months.

On that point, the Assistant Secretary-General for Mission Support, the Chef de Cabinet, the Head of OIOS, the Under-Secretary-General for Management and I are all fully on board with the Secretary-General's position that we need to be proactive and aggressive in detecting and dealing swiftly with this critical issue. If allegations are proven following due process, dishonest people should be fired and face justice. That is as important here as it is in the case of sex crimes, which constitute a different and most egregious category of offence and demand the highest degree of vigilance.

And finally, we will be seeking formal support from Member States on a longer-term reform agenda for peacekeeping in general, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report now before the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The implementation of those reforms should also help to address some underlying structural

weaknesses that give rise to the acts of misconduct we have been discussing over the past few days.

In conclusion, I want to say that we have tens of thousands of extremely competent, honest and courageous personnel in the field. Those are the nationals — uniformed and civilian personnel alike — of Member States. We cannot allow acts of serious misconduct by some to betray their good work and tarnish the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping. It is an indispensable instrument, it is effective, and it is helping maintain peace for tens of millions of people around the world.

The President: I thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein: I am honoured once again to brief the Security Council on this important subject and I am grateful to you, Sir, for having arranged this meeting. I will try, for the most part, not to repeat the points presented to the Council at our last briefing, and so request that my comments be viewed as an update to what was stated here on 31 May 2005.

I believe it is safe for me to conclude that, of all the items on our reform agenda, sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel are the one item we — the Member States, acting with the Secretariat — have been able to treat quietly, without much fuss and with some measure of success.

That assessment may seem out of place, in view of the continued receipt by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of a high number of allegations relating to sexual exploitation and abuse — a matter I will touch on shortly. Nevertheless, I believe it to be the correct assessment.

The Secretariat and the Member States have by and large completed or are about to complete the changes called for by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations — the Committee of 34 — following the latter's review of the report submitted by my team, entitled "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations". Members heard from Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno on those achievements this morning.

What remains before us now, in rounding out the work of the last 10 months, is to finalize the revisions to the 1997 model Memorandum of Understanding, to reach an agreement between Member States on the national investigations officer concept — a concept being refined currently by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) — and to receive two rather sophisticated documents: the product of the group of legal experts relating to the de facto impunity enjoyed by some civilian staff members, and the United Nations policy statement and comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims.

When I had the honour of addressing the Committee of 34 on 4 April 2005, I said that I expected the entire reform effort, where sexual exploitation and abuse are concerned, to last two or so years, and I advised then that it would be wise for the Committee to treat the simpler, more practical proposals immediately and to confront those more complex legal, technical issues at a later date, once the preparatory work had been achieved.

We will therefore proceed soon to tackle the second phase of our work. The Committee of 34 will in due course be invited to revisit the recommendation, contained in the comprehensive strategy, that the troop-contributing countries conduct their courts martial in the mission area itself. That topic was not given more than a cursory reading last year and was put aside because some countries said they could not exercise their jurisdiction extraterritorially. Nevertheless, over the last few months, two major troop contributors have in fact completed courts martial in a mission area, and have done so successfully. And, as expected, in rendering justice before the local populations they are there to serve, the troop contributors and the United Nations were able to retain the confidence of those local populations. More Member States need to be encouraged to follow that example, and the Committee of 34 should, through the General Assembly, invite all those countries that are able to conduct courts martial in the mission area to in fact do so. The Committee of 34 should also establish modalities for that purpose.

Turning to individual civilian staff members and the question of impunity for crimes of a sexual nature committed on mission, the difficulty for the United Nations arises whenever grounds for an investigation

into suspected criminal conduct begin to emerge, but neither the host State nor the sending State are in a position to exercise their jurisdiction, either because of circumstances in theatre — that is, when there is no functioning judiciary — or because of legal constraints on the part of the State whose national is under suspicion. The Committee of 34 therefore asked the group of legal experts

> "[t]o provide advice on the best way to proceed so as to ensure that the original intent of the Charter ... can be achieved, namely that United Nations staff and experts on mission would never be effectively exempt from the consequences of criminal acts committed at their duty station, nor unjustly penalized, in accordance with due process" (*A/59/19/Rev.1, part two, para. 40 (a)*).

The group has, as I understand it, a full draft ready before it, requiring only its final review, and once the experts have adopted their text, it will eventually be sent to the Sixth Committee. The Committee of 34 also required the group of legal experts to answer the question as to whether the standards drawn up in the Secretary-General's bulletin could bind contingent members prior to the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding. It also requested the group to propose a way of standardizing norms of conduct applicable to all categories of United Nations personnel. Regrettably, our current experts are unable to assume that undertaking, owing to their other commitments, and a new group of experts will therefore be assembled shortly for that purpose.

The Secretary-General is also about to release a United Nations policy statement and comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims. That document is a thoughtful proposal, prepared carefully over the last nine months by members of the Secretariat, and it will likely contain some bold recommendations. Once that text is presented to the Committee of 34, sometime over the coming days, it will be important for Member States to remain cognizant, in the course of their ensuing discussions and negotiations, of a sense of responsibility towards the victims of United Nations abuse.

As I noted at the outset of this brief presentation, the number of allegations being lodged against United Nations peacekeeping personnel remains high, and unacceptably so. But, as we have made clear to all Member States repeatedly over the last year, that is not entirely unexpected. Until we are able pin down all four corners of our strategy — and, as I said earlier, our work is not yet complete — we should expect at least some allegations. Moreover, with every improvement in the mechanisms designed to facilitate complaints, it is likely we will see occasional spikes in the number of accusations.

Nevertheless, the numbers of allegations currently being registered in some locations still cause us considerable concern. We, the Member States, must therefore, together with all personnel serving in the field, exert even greater efforts in all the missions concerned to drawn those numbers down. We also need to ensure that more resources are provided to OIOS, so that it can carry out its preliminary investigations efficiently, in conjunction with troop contributors. Ultimately, we must continue to view sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations not as some ephemeral issue simply of passing importance, but as the serious issue it in fact is.

I must also acknowledge, however, how hard it is to change a culture of dismissiveness, long developed within ourselves, in our own countries and in the mission areas. We can often legislate a response swiftly when reacting to crises of this sort, but our rate of absorption — absorbing these changes to the point where we can say we have changed our attitudes or a culture — is, as we all know, still problematical. Yet that cannot, of course, be held up as an excuse for the persistent nature of these alleged abuses, because there can, of course, be no excuse for such phenomena.

DPKO, OIOS and OLA have all responded to the challenges imposed on us by sexual exploitation and abuse in a manner deserving of our acknowledgment and gratitude. Despite what I have just noted about current allegations, Member States — and in particular troop-contributing countries — have also been supportive as regards the agreements reached in the General Assembly last year and the implementation thus far of the first phase of our work.

Finally, one cannot — must not — forget that there are peacekeepers, representing all parts of the world, who are dying every year in pursuit of the objectives being established by the Council. They and their surviving colleagues perform a service to the international community of immense worth, a fact that must never be lost in all of this. It is because we know that that it is all the more urgent for us to remove the

blight of sexual exploitation and abuse from what is otherwise distinguished and appreciated performance.

The President: I thank His Royal Highness Prince Al-Hussein for his briefing.

I invite Council members who wish to take the floor so to indicate to the Secretariat.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to say that I am pleased that the President has taken the initiative to hold this public debate on the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation on the part of peacekeeping forces.

I should first like to reaffirm my country's full support for the steps taken by the Secretary-General to combat those abuses. Those efforts will determine the credibility of the Organization and of the values it enshrines. I also welcome the resolve I noted from the statement made by Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, which, I am pleased to say, illustrates the extent to which his Department is committed to combating sexual abuse and exploitation.

I also wish in particular to thank Prince Zeid for his statement, as well as to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him for his efforts.

In a report he issued almost one year ago, he proposed a comprehensive strategy aiming at the elimination of sexual abuse and exploitation in United Nations peacekeeping operations. That report provided us with a blueprint to that end and remains our road map. We must follow the course of action it sets out if we wish to end such reprehensible acts that fail to meet the basic duty to provide assistance that every member of a peacekeeping operation has towards the local populations they have been set to protect. Such a policy is crucial to ensuring the full implementation of the goals of the United Nations and, as I have said, to guaranteeing that its values are upheld.

The Security Council has adopted several important resolutions regarding children in armed conflict, women and peace and security and the protection of civilians. The revelation of the existence of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2004 on the part of a significant number of peacekeepers was a serious blow to the Council's efforts and to how peacekeeping missions are perceived. Such behaviour must be resolutely punished. Prince Zeid's report was the first step in establishing a zero-tolerance policy with regard to such actions. For its part, France fully supports a zero-tolerance policy, which we are seeking to put in place at the national level.

It seems to us that we have two goals in combating sexual abuse and exploitation. The first is to protect those who have been the victims of sexual abuse on the part of peacekeepers, while recognizing the responsibility of the United Nations for the behaviour of peacekeepers. Secondly, we should strengthen the administrative disciplinary measures taken by the Organization, as well as judicial prosecution by States against those responsible.

In their briefings, both speakers were quite correct to state that peacekeeping operations are primarily comprised of dedicated, competent and conscientious men and women, and that, while the shortcomings of some should not cast a shadow on peacekeeping missions in general, those shortcomings must nevertheless be punished and a policy of prevention put in place.

Much has been done since the publication of Prince Zeid's report. As both speakers have pointed out, much work remains to be done. We believe that the strategy to be developed must be based on several priorities. First, we must concentrate our efforts on the most serious cases of sexual abuse, namely, those involving paedophilia, rape, violence and human trafficking. Such an approach may entail making a more specific distinction between the various categories of offences.

A second priority should be to expand protection and assistance for those who file complaints. For example, we may wish explicitly to include women in teams investigating complaints. In terms of the assistance to be provided, aid could predominantly take the form of care, rather than financial assistance.

Regarding the financing of such measures, the idea of a voluntary trust fund for victims should be explored.

Finally, with respect to the institution of mechanisms of inquiry — an idea that my delegation fully supports — we must ensure that we articulate and combine effectively procedures for an administrative inquiry, which are up to the Organization, and judicial procedures, which of necessity fall within the purview of States.

In conclusion, I should like to go back to something that Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno said earlier.

If I understood him correctly, he said — and, in any case, this is my firm belief also — that in this matter we require determination on the part of the Secretariat, that there can be no respite in the process; and that there must be a complete commitment on the part of Member States. Those requirements are vital, because we have a collective moral duty to the victims, to safeguard the image of the Organization; and to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, which is at the core of our Organization's mission and is the major task facing the Council.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Before I make my statement, I wish sincerely to thank Mr. Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing. I should like also to thank the Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, Prince Zeid, for his report. Their briefings enabled the Security Council to understand better the situation. We deem it very significant for us to consider this issue.

In recent years, all the parties have deepened their understanding of the positive role played by peacekeeping operations and have also increased their inputs in that respect. At the same time, however, there has been a succession of occurrences of involvement by peacekeeping personnel in sexual exploitation and abuse. That is not only shocking to us but also a disgrace to peacekeeping operations.

Like other members, China is deeply concerned in this respect. If we cannot find an adequate and comprehensive solution to this problem, there is no doubt that it will undermine existing peacekeeping operations and impose serious constraints on the future deployment of new peacekeeping operations.

Last year the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations discussed this issue and put forward a series of corrective measures and proposals that included the investigation and punishment of suspected perpetrators, the revision of the relevant codes of conduct and legal provisions, and the enhancement of pre-deployment training for peacekeeping personnel and of educational campaigns.

China has taken note of the fact that most of those proposals have been implemented and that initial results have been achieved in eliminating and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel.

China resolutely supports the proposals put forward by Prince Zeid, especially as concerns the recommendation that the United Nations formulate and implement a "zero-tolerance" policy for sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations.

The next step should be to focus on prevention and response and to severely punish the perpetrators. At the same time, we need to formulate effective measures with respect to assistance to victims, revise the model memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and troop-contributing countries, and work to improve the entertainment facilities available to peacekeepers.

There is an old Chinese saying that one flaw cannot obscure the splendor of jade. In contrast to all of the efforts and contributions of the entire peacekeeping team, only a small handful of people have engaged in such disgraceful behaviour. China resolutely believes that with joint efforts on the part of the Secretariat, troop-contributing countries and all the parties concerned, this problem will be resolved. China will continue to make positive efforts in that direction.

Mr. Denisov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches great significance to upholding high moral and ethical standards of conduct for all categories of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. This matter deserves ongoing attention by the Organization and its Member States. Today, when peacekeeping activities are increasingly serving as a gauge of the effectiveness of the United Nations in matters of international peace and security, we cannot allow the good reputation of peacekeepers to be sullied by actions of sexual exploitation and abuse. We believe that the United Nations must undertake comprehensive and vigorous actions to combat this scourge.

In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Guehenno, and to the Secretariat as a whole for their report today, which, in our view, is indeed of a comprehensive nature.

I should like also to express our appreciation to the Adviser to the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, for his contribution to the development of a "zero tolerance" policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. We also welcome the efforts being undertaken in that regard by the General

Assembly and by its Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, and we are prepared to participate actively in that work. We will be interested to see the results of the work of the legal experts on a seldom-studied question: that of eliminating impunity among the civilian personnel of peacekeeping missions.

In our view, critical tasks in terms of eliminating instances of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations would involve the following steps.

The first step would require a harmonization of the existing rules of conduct for peacekeepers and their articulation in a clear and accessible form, so that they could become an important part of the training of peacekeeping personnel.

Secondly, a system should be established for interaction among the Secretariat, the troop-contributing countries and the host States, within their respective competencies. Success in that regard would lie not in redistributing responsibilities among participants in peacekeeping work, but rather in establishing channels for their interaction.

The third step would involve the establishment of a mechanism that is effective and as transparent as possible to ensure accountability with respect to the investigations conducted and the measures taken. We believe that all of those measures must receive in-depth consideration so as to make them effective in the long term.

The Security Council can also play an important role in combating sexual crimes. The role of this body must be first and foremost to draw up the mandates of peacekeeping missions with great care and to establish a reliable political monitoring mechanism for their implementation. Peacekeeping contingents must receive clear instructions as to what actions they are allowed to take, and their preparation and numbers must be in line with their functions. We, too, believe that there is a need to develop a strategy better to organize leisure and recreational activities for the contingents. Nevertheless, we believe that what is even more important is the rational organization of the on-duty time of the peacekeepers. Here it would be good, perhaps, to remind ourselves of the old saying that exists in the military that a soldier's idle mind is the devil's workshop.

Nana Effah Apenteng (Ghana): Let me first express appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno and His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, Permanent Representative of Jordan and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, for their eloquent and comprehensive briefings.

Peacekeeping operations are, undoubtedly, the most tangible testimony of United Nations actions in fulfilling one of its important responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Having brought succour and hope to the deprived victims of conflict, the distinguished service of the blue helmets over the years has been widely acclaimed. Regrettably, this enviable pedigree has been sullied, albeit partially, by recent dishonourable conduct, in particular, sexual exploitation and abuse, perpetrated by a few misguided and undisciplined individuals.

The overwhelming condemnation of such grave human rights abuses by the international community and the prompt remedial action initiated by the Secretary-General, supported by Member States, has helped to redeem the credibility of the Organization.

My delegation is encouraged by the continuing seriousness with which the United Nations is trying to stem this menace completely, especially the role of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which between 1 January 2004 and 9 December 2005 has investigated 278 alleged sexual exploitation and abuse cases. The creation of the conduct and discipline teams to, among other things, monitor cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and their resolution is another worthwhile initiative. So far, the teams are operating in eight missions. These measures and others are a true reflection of the Organization's avowed determination to ensure the realization of this oft-repeated slogan of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. The relentless efforts by troop-contributing countries towards the attainment of this goal cannot be ignored.

Although we may assume that some progress has been made, an objective assessment of these measures can only be made if data is provided on reported cases prior to their implementation and during the period thereafter. We, therefore, call on the Secretariat to apprise Member States of the requisite statistics to facilitate a thorough review. In any case, it is the expectation of my delegation that any such report will indicate a decrease in such malfeasance. Our optimism is premised on the fact that even an increase in

reported cases could be positively reviewed and attributed to the creation of awareness, which has contributed to the lifting of the veil of silence that has existed up to now.

Again, while welcoming the initial stationing of the teams in eight missions, it is also pertinent to ascertain the factors that informed that decision. We hope that efforts will be made to cover the remaining 10 missions, since undue delay in that regard will be misconstrued and lead to criticism of selectivity.

It is the candid view of my delegation that the quest for a comprehensive solution to the abuses could be enhanced by the provision of welfare and recreational facilities for troops. Having charged this responsibility to troop-contributing countries, it behoves the Secretariat to ensure prompt reimbursement to those participating in peacekeeping operations so as to enable them to pay for the construction of such facilities.

Closely related to sexual exploitation and abuse is the wider issue of women, peace and development and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). In this regard, the effective utilization of available gender expertise would assist tremendously in gaining a better understanding of the societies and people to whom the peace processes are extending needed help. The total implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is, therefore, imperative.

In conclusion, Ghana, as a major troop-contributing country, unreservedly supports measures to eradicate the grave violation of human rights through sexual exploitation and abuse, since the hard-won honour of troop-contributing countries should not be tarnished by the misconduct of a few.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for having convened this meeting that allows us to continue thinking about a vital question that has to do with the United Nations image. I would also like to thank Mr. Guehenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, whose briefing this morning has shown the importance of the activities undertaken by his Department to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. I would, of course, also like to thank Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, which gives us an update and presents positive developments in the implementation of his report.

We can say, without fear of error, that through peacekeeping operations — the success of which until now has been undeniable, given the growing number of countries that have managed to extricate themselves from conflict situations — that the Security Council presents a positive image of its action in terms of peacekeeping. Well aware of the importance of this fact, leaders from around the world emphasized, during the September summit, that peacekeeping is at the heart of United Nations activities and that the Organization needs to be up to the task of meeting the challenges in this area. They also expressed their concern with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse. That latter point, which is the subject of today's debate, is sufficiently important that the duty to become more aware of such deviant behaviours and to provide assistance to those who are vulnerable has led us to greater cohesiveness in the various United Nations bodies.

If any good can come from this, it will come from determining, not which organ has done the best job, but rather how we, together, can contribute to curbing this evil. How can we not act collectively, given these arguably ignominious actions?

In his report, Prince Zeid said,

> "prostitution and other sexual exploitation in a peacekeeping context is profoundly disturbing to many because the United Nations has been mandated to enter into a broken society to help it, not to breach the trust placed in it by the local population. Moreover, the Organization should not in any way increase the suffering of vulnerable sectors of the population, which has often been devastated by war or civil conflict". (*A/59/710, para. 6*)

The example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the most often cited one today, shows to what extent these actions sometimes begin to look like really villainous crimes. Young girls have been raped and then put in a dependency situation for a handful of cash or a little bit of food, and then they are pushed further back into prostitution and degradation.

My delegation believes that deviant behaviour in peacekeeping operations, which, by the way, is not something recent and the current scope of which can only cause more shock and indignation, is unjustifiable. Exploitation and sexual abuse, the subject of our debate today, are contrary to the ideal of

peacekeeping operations, as many delegations have indicated. That ideal is to save human lives and attenuate the suffering of people in countries undergoing conflict.

We must, therefore, be firmer in our approach to extract peacekeeping operations from this difficult and shameful situation, because silence exposes them to public opprobrium and their essential goal is to save lives, not to destroy them. I would, therefore, like to salute the efforts undertaken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the troop-contributing countries in implementation of the Brahimi report to remedy these situations.

The recommendations set out in Prince Zeid's report — whose implementation by DPKO is well under way — give us an effective framework, as they provide a comprehensive solution to a problem that is a challenge. We therefore urge the continuation of these efforts, including the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy and a zero-complacency policy, referred to by the Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet yesterday. Such a commitment would honour our institution.

In my delegation's view, the zero-tolerance policy requires practical measures involving Member States, troop-contributing countries and the populations concerned. We support the regulatory provisions already adopted or now being elaborated on codes of conduct and behaviour. In that regard, we see as positive the incorporation of provisions contained in the Secretary-General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) into legal agreements related to experts on mission and into past agreements with troop-contributing countries.

However, adopting measures is one thing, implementing them is another. The role of training becomes readily apparent here. And we are pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report (A/60/640/Add.1) indicates that provisions are in the process of being implemented or formulated to compensate for certain shortcomings. We also note with interest the circulation to Member States since October 2005 of the generic training module, whose first part is devoted to sexual exploitation and abuse.

In his recommendations, Prince Zeid says, quite rightly, that the guilty silence must be broken. That is why we insist on the following. The concerned populations, who must be aware of their rights — including the right to file complaints regarding abuse that they have experienced — must be trained and educated. In that regard, peacekeeping missions must implement the Department's directives and must be accountable. The civilian and military hierarchies of the various contingents must be trained and educated to ensure that sexual exploitation and abuse are not covered up or tolerated. These hierarchies — which themselves are not above suspicion — must be able to implement and ensure compliance with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy. Oversight mechanisms must be instituted, including within these hierarchies, to break the silence at all levels. The role of the Department itself with respect to the collection and management of data on the management of disciplinary procedures and the adjustment of policies could go as far as establishing an early warning system.

Zero complacency means finding the guilty, identifying them and applying the appropriate punishment. All modern means must be used for that purpose. The so-called peacekeeping babies must not remain fatherless. It would also be highly desirable if all those involved in peacekeeping operations voluntarily agreed to submit to state-of-the-art identity testing. Thus, evidence of rape would be easily identifiable, and unaware fathers could be traced.

In that connection, legal agreements with troop-contributing countries must be sufficiently explicit. A mechanism must be found to ensure that the guilty are truly punished in their countries of origin. We must also plan a mechanism enabling victims to seek justice, which is not always obvious in certain cases in which the individuals concerned might be illiterate. When individuals cannot act on their own because of ignorance or fear of reprisal, a specific mechanism should be set up.

I cannot conclude without paying a well-deserved tribute to all those men and women who have sacrificed their lives in the service of peace. Fortunately, among the men and women who serve peace, there are honest people whose merit cannot be overshadowed by the guilty behaviour of undisciplined elements. These honest men and women, who constitute the great majority, deserve our recognition and respect. Without their commitment, our action in the service of peace could not be carried out.

My delegation reaffirms its firm support for peacekeeping operations, which — for Africa in

particular — are a tool of international cooperation in situations of armed crisis.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I would like to join others in underlining the importance of the issue we are discussing today. Allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse must be taken extremely seriously. They are directly relevant to the conduct of operations authorized by the Security Council, and they undermine the essential work being carried out in peacebuilding areas. They also affect the wider image and credibility of the United Nations. I believe that they demonstrate why we have what others have described as an obligation — a moral imperative — to pursue these issues vigorously in all the relevant organs of the United Nations system and to tackle all aspects of the problem through comprehensive policies, including, crucially, the provision of support to victims.

The United Kingdom fully supports the statement to be made later this morning by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to begin by recognizing the vital role that United Nations peacekeeping operations have played for decades in bringing peace and stability to countries emerging from war. The United Kingdom further recognizes that the large majority of the women and men who serve in United Nations peacekeeping operations do so with the utmost professionalism and dedication and in some cases, sadly, make the ultimate sacrifice.

The United Kingdom shares the deep concern over the allegations of sexual misconduct by United Nations peacekeeping personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2004 and 2005. We condemn, in the strongest terms, all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by whomsoever and wherever they are committed. So we strongly support the action of the Secretary-General to implement his zero-tolerance approach in all United Nations missions.

It follows that we welcome the comprehensive report (A/59/710) on sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, which contained detailed recommendations on tackling this issue and reiterated the importance of urgent action on sexual exploitation and abuse. I want to pay particular tribute to Ambassador Zeid for his continuing and dedicated work. We must all work together to see that the recommendations of his report are fully and properly implemented. The test will be whether real progress is made on the ground as well as in committee.

From listening to the Under-Secretary-General, it is clear that progress is being made. That fact owes a great deal to his personal leadership in addressing openly this acute problem and in trying to make sure that comprehensive policies are put in place to tackle all aspects of sexual exploitation and abuse. We particularly welcome the fact that uniform standards have now been implemented for all civilian and uniformed personnel contracted by the United Nations. We also welcome the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to finalize the draft model memorandum of understanding, and we hope that the General Assembly can adopt it before the end of its sixtieth session.

Furthermore, we welcome the progress that has been made in the area of training and, in particular, in the mandatory sexual exploitation and abuse module that has now been introduced, as well as progress on welfare and recreation, which is an essential element of making sure that troops actually behave themselves in theatre.

But while there has been some progress in tackling some progress in tackling this difficult and sensitive issue, sexual exploitation and abuse remains a significant problem in many missions. Both DPKO and troop-contributing countries need to do much more to implement the decisions taken at the 2005 session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to enforce the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy.

Let me be clear: it is a shared responsibility of the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretariat, the Special Representative — whoever he or she may be — in theatre and, crucially, the troop-contributing countries to ensure that we tackle and eradicate this problem. If we fail to do so, we will do nothing less than risk the success of missions and jeopardize United Nations peacekeeping in general.

It is also the case that the widespread mainstreaming of gender into all policies and programmes at the national and international levels is also a crucial factor in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. We must therefore do justice to resolution 1325 (2000), ensuring that women are full and equal participants in peace processes and, through that, that we help better to create sustainable peace. For

its part, the United Kingdom has, since the publication of the comprehensive report (A/59/710), worked with the Secretariat and major troop-contributing countries, as appropriate, to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented.

The United Kingdom is systematically looking for opportunities to ensure that language against sexual exploitation and abuse is included in Security Council resolutions, in peacekeeping mandates and in reports at both the United Nations and other international organizations. For our part, the Ministry of Defence in London provides training on gender, child-protection and human rights issues to all United Kingdom military personnel embarking on peacekeeping or similar overseas missions. I recommend that to colleagues as a necessary step as part of information-sharing and putting responsibility where it properly belongs. Nationally, of course, we also take action in those cases where members of our military contingents are alleged to have been involved in any misbehaviour; the test is how those cases are then followed up and tackled.

In addition to the support already provided to the Secretariat and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), we aim, at the next session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, to encourage other member States to support the establishment of conduct and discipline units as a full-time dedicated capacity. This would ensure that work undertaken by those units has a long-lasting impact on the situation. We also encourage Special Committee endorsement of the participation of troop-contributing countries in investigations to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in a national criminal court. We look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's comprehensive strategy for assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Let me conclude by once again condemning all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and underlining the resolve of the United Kingdom to see the issues tackled and the problem of sexual misconduct eliminated in all its forms. I hope that today's discussion will stiffen the common resolve of the organs of the United Nations, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries to rid United Nations peacekeeping missions of this scourge. But we should be conscious that, as the Under-Secretary-General said, we are only at the beginning of a programme of systemic and sustained change. A great deal more is therefore yet to be done. We have a moral responsibility to do what is needed to accomplish that.

Mrs. Papadopoulou (Greece): I too would like to thank Mr. Guéhenno for his briefing today and to express our appreciation to Prince Zeid for his tireless work to address and resolve an issue which is obviously of great concern to all of us — an issue which has an undeniable impact on the credibility and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping efforts as a whole.

Greece associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly by the Austrian presidency of the European Union.

Peacekeeping operations constitute the most effective and successful means to deal with situations that constitute a threat to international peace and security. And, in that respect, all personnel involved in those operations play an invaluable role, working under extremely difficult circumstances and even putting their lives at risk. They are doing a truly remarkable job, and they deserve our respect and our deep gratitude.

It is unfortunate, though, that the unacceptable behaviour of certain individuals within peacekeeping operations threatens to tarnish the very name and image which allow the United Nations to work so effectively in war-torn countries and to bring peace and stability to millions around the world. Only by holding itself to the highest standards of ethical conduct can the United Nations preserve the credibility and moral authority necessary to carry out its mission in societies already vulnerable and deeply wounded by the turmoil and brutality of war.

Greece condemns in the strongest terms all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeeping personnel, military and civilian, and reiterates once again its strong support for the United Nations zero-tolerance policy in such cases.

In this regard, the United Nations should undertake every effort to further identify patterns of abuse, record and report incidents and ensure that justice is served. The misconduct of the few should not undercut the contributions of the many. However, only once accountable and transparent response strategies are in place to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and to protect local populations from it will the United

Nations send a message that it does not tolerate or condone such behaviour.

We would like to underline the importance of bolstering the highest standards of discipline and conduct befitting a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Training programmes for new peacekeeping personnel — including training in international humanitarian law, human rights law and children's rights law, with specific reference to the protection of children and women — must make clear that the zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse will be fully enforced. Additionally, in order to implement these standards, we must create a culture that rejects and penalizes such abhorrent behaviour at every level, from the senior civilian and military leadership down to the level of individual peacekeepers.

Close cooperation between troop-contributing countries and the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the conduct of investigations is crucial in the fight against impunity in order to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in the relevant national jurisdiction. It is also extremely important that managers and commanders be made responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse, that they be clearly directed to facilitate investigations and that they be held accountable for their failures in this regard. Furthermore, it is indispensable that there be no impunity for any individuals participating in peacekeeping missions who have committed a criminal offence, including United Nations staff and experts on mission, bearing in mind the principle that the same norms of conduct must apply to all categories of peacekeeping personnel.

We believe that the revised draft model memorandum of understanding to be adopted by the General Assembly as a basis for negotiation with troop-contributing countries will be invaluable for ensuring that troop-contributing Governments are fully aware of, and can be held to account for, their responsibilities in this area.

The United Nations must ensure, as part of its overall efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse by its staff and related personnel, that complainants and victims have access to timely, effective and compassionate support, including medical, psychological and legal services. All complainants and victims are to be treated with humanity and respect for their dignity and human rights. To ensure that all new policies are widely acknowledged, understood, adhered to and enforced, unified guidelines applicable to all United Nations peacekeeping personnel should be developed and implemented.

It is unacceptable that anyone connected with a United Nations peacekeeping mission — the very people the world entrusts with the task of protecting civilians from harm — should prey on the very women and children seeking their help. The problem, though, cannot be fixed overnight and needs to be addressed on a long-term basis. All of us — the Secretariat and the Member States — need to show commitment and determination and take the necessary measures to deal with it, both in our immediate response to such cases when they occur and in formulating a comprehensive strategy to combat and eradicate the phenomenon.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): I would like first of all to join other colleagues in thanking Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and Prince Zeid, Permanent Representative of Jordan and Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for their valuable briefings. We commend them for their leadership and for their tireless efforts in addressing problems of sexual exploitation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Important observations presented today by Prince Zeid and Mr. Guéhenno confirm that sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations is a serious problem that can damage the reputation and credibility of the United Nations and its operations and that can jeopardize the fulfilment of the mandates of such operations. We agree that the urgent and constant attention and determined action of all relevant United Nations bodies is needed to effectively address the problem in all its complexity. We therefore welcome this initiative of the presidency, which offers us an opportunity to discuss the topic today. We fully align ourselves with the statement to be made later by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore limit my statement to just a few comments.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that Slovakia strongly denounces all forms of sexual misconduct committed by peacekeepers. We consider it inexcusable that peacekeepers, who are mandated to protect civilians against human rights violations and

abuse, should be involved in acts that they are supposed to help eradicate.

In this context, we fully support the recommendations contained in the comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, elaborated by Prince Zeid (see A/59/710). We also welcome the priority attention that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has been paying to the area of sexual exploitation and abuse. The efforts of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and DPKO, in particular those of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit, have had positive results. However, we agree that much remains to be done in that area. The full realization of the zero-tolerance principle in the field remains a challenge, and is an important priority.

We consider the preparation of a comprehensive United Nations policy on support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to be an endeavour of paramount importance. Its accelerated implementation in the field will be indispensable for achieving significant progress in addressing this negative phenomenon. The creation of conduct and discipline units in peacekeeping operations is another important step in the right direction. We appreciate the positive achievements in the preparation of the investigation module. However, much remains to be done to make investigations of military or civilian personnel in the field fully functional.

Slovakia fully supports the incorporation of national investigative officers and courts martial into the investigation processes. We are of the opinion — indeed, we are convinced — that that step will increase the number of sexual exploitation and abuse investigations that are concluded and prosecuted. Issues such as the legal authority of the OIOS investigative team, differences in investigative methods and national rules and transparency are challenges that need to be addressed appropriately. In that regard, we look forward to the report of the legal experts, which will be sent to the Sixth Committee soon, as Prince Zeid informed us.

We certainly all agree that prevention is the best tool for avoiding crime or misconduct. That is also true of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. In that context, we are of the opinion that all peacekeepers — military, police or civilian — must undergo appropriate training on conduct. That concerns in particular managers and commanders, who should be very mindful of misconduct and aware of their own responsibilities in the matter.

It would be naive to expect sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations missions to be tackled overnight. It should be our firm commitment to persist and consistently promote the principle of zero tolerance and zero impunity for misconduct. The briefings and discussions today demonstrate the determination of the Secretariat and Member countries to address the problem with renewed vigour. We are convinced that the more attention we pay to these problems, the sooner we will succeed in eliminating cases of sexual exploitation and abuse from United Nations peacekeeping operations. That must be our common goal and priority.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having taken the initiative to hold a public meeting of the Security Council on this very serious matter affecting the Organization. I would also like to express appreciation to Mr. Guehenno for the efforts the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is making to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. My thanks go also to Prince Zeid for his briefing updating us on efforts to eradicate those crimes since 31 May 2005.

We believe it very appropriate that the Security Council should take up the subject of sexual exploitation and abuse. Such crimes are a perversion of the spirit and letter of the Charter. They are crimes that cut to the humanist heart of the Organization — the defence of human rights. Ultimately, they undermine the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations and the international community's confidence in the functioning of our multilateral system for peace.

As has been said, we, the Member States, must have zero tolerance for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. In order to do away with such crimes, we must implement preventive measures and apply exemplary punishment through due process. We therefore welcome the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to prevent the entrenchment within the United Nations of what was called a few days ago a culture of inaction, which could lead to a culture of impunity.

With regard to preventive measures, my delegation supports the annexing to memorandums of understanding — the agreements that govern the participation of Member States in peacekeeping operations — a code of conduct that personnel must observe. Such a code of conduct will enable States — Governments, which have responsibility in this area — to have full prior knowledge of the ethical and legal commitments required of their troops taking part in a peacekeeping operation. Furthermore, the training process should be intensified with a view to ensuring, if possible, that every single peacekeeper is trained. Information and training should also be provided to multilateral forces authorized by the United Nations with regard to the Geneva Conventions, the Convention against Torture and other relevant human rights instruments.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/60/640 and Add.1), between January 2004 and October 2005 investigations were carried out into accusations of acts of sexual abuse and exploitation committed by 264 peacekeeping personnel. However, more up-to-date figures indicate that there may be as many as 400 accusations. That means that, over the past two years, approximately 25 per cent of the accusations made have not been investigated. That may be the result of a lack of sufficient human and financial resources to carry out the investigations.

Another aspect of sexual exploitation and abuse is the reluctance of the victims themselves to denounce such criminal acts — reluctance that might be due to ignorance or, perhaps, to their reverential feelings towards international authorities.

One system that could prove helpful would be the establishment of some sort of office of ombudsman for peacekeeping operations that would work in the field and report directly to Member States on acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the ombudsman would ensure that factual information could be obtained directly in the field, allowing the victim and the defendant to provide their own version of the incident. Such a practice would allow for greater due process in the investigation and sanctions system.

In his report, the Secretary-General states that, in the second half of this year, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations will establish a general database to track such crimes. In that regard, we believe that the database should be even broader than that described in the report. It should not only identify the accused, but provide information on the accusers, as well as on allegations under investigation and the reasons why other allegations have not been investigated.

It is said that the United Nations sends its peacekeeping forces to do work that no one else wants to do. Now we are faced with an aberration, whereby wicked elements in peacekeeping operations do what no one wants them to do — that is, perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse. I conclude by stressing that, in response to the crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse, Member States must cooperate and initiate a policy of zero tolerance. Disciplinary bodies must be created so that the United Nations does not lose its legitimacy in world public opinion.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Let me first of all emphasize that I find it most appropriate that the Council should take stock of this important issue on a regular basis.

The last time we had sexual exploitation and abuse on our agenda was during the Danish presidency in May last year. Today, as in May, we have received updates from Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guéhenno and the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Ambassador Zeid. I would like to thank both of them for their very useful briefings, their views on the present status of implementation and their thoughts on how to move forward from here.

Denmark fully supports the statement to be delivered shortly by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping forces and other staff members of the United Nations is one that we would all have preferred to do without. It is completely unacceptable by all moral and ethical standards, it undermines the reputation of the United Nations, and it has devastating consequences for the victims. Therefore, Denmark is pleased that the United Nations has taken a number of important steps to fight sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security of October 2005 included a United Nations system-wide action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We warmly welcome the fact that one of the key areas of action

was response to sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff, related personnel and partners. In order to secure an effective follow-up to resolution 1325 (2000), we — the United Nations and its Member States — need to demonstrate firm action and prosecute the perpetrators who violate not only our trust, but the trust of those they were sent to help and protect. The policy of zero tolerance has to be implemented.

Denmark has already initiated a national study on how to protect women and girls against, for example, sexual exploitation and abuse throughout the planning and completion of international operations. The study will, among other things, ensure that the protection of women and girls is reflected in all the basic documents of any given operation and in the education of the Danish armed forces.

It is of the utmost importance that a policy of zero tolerance go hand in hand with the implementation of awareness and accountability programmes. Awareness-raising programmes should focus on pre-mission training, training upon arrival in the mission area, and training and awareness throughout the deployment. Programmes on accountability should target not only the individual soldiers or staff, but also the management. All levels of staff must realize that sexual exploitation and abuse will not be tolerated and that misbehaviour will be penalized.

If we succeed in that field and manage to change the culture, the perception and the mentality to a point at which sexual exploitation and abuse are no longer accepted or tolerated at any level in the Organization, there will be no need for investigation teams, no need for victim assistance programmes and no more embarrassing news about misbehaved United Nations peacekeepers. That will happen only in a perfect world, I admit. We are not there yet, but let us together try to get as close as possible.

Allow me, in that connection, to mention that Denmark has agreed to sponsor a train-the-trainer workshop in Italy, organized by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) under the rubric "Capacity-building on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations".

Denmark also supports the ongoing work in the Working Group of the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations, where a number of recommendations proposed by, among others, Prince Zeid and DPKO will be further discussed. Several of those recommendations seem from the outset to be straightforward, logical and obvious. We are, however, well aware that in the attempt to implement the various initiatives, many complex legal aspects have surfaced. Legal obstacles, however, should not prevent us from continuously striving to make progress. The fight against sexual exploitation and abuse must continue. Let me at this stage urge all troop- and police-contributing countries to cooperate actively with DPKO on that issue.

Likewise, I expect that the Secretariat shall not hesitate to return to the Council and ask for further guidance, if need be.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): First, I thank Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno and Ambassador Zeid for their detailed briefings.

My delegation acknowledges with appreciation the fact that, since the serious problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers came to light, considerable efforts have been made over the past months by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the missions deployed in the field and troop-contributing Governments to address the issue and take the necessary preventive and remedial measures. We strongly support the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary-General in striving to stamp out that inexcusable misconduct in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We particularly appreciated the highly valuable report submitted, along with recommendations, last March by the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General, Prince Zeid, on this issue. I wish to take this opportunity to pay a high tribute to the great efforts and contributions that the Ambassador of Jordan continues to make on that matter. Subsequent to that report, Member States and the Secretariat worked together in the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and adopted a comprehensive report providing for preventive measures to be implemented in all peacekeeping missions, including appropriate punishment for all violators of the rules.

Those are commendable efforts, but what is clearly most important is the implementation of the measures by all parties concerned, including DPKO

and troop-contributing countries. The briefings provided this morning have made it clear that, while much improvement has been recorded in the field and at the Headquarters level to implement some of those recommendations — and we must acknowledge and appreciate the accomplishments that have been made — the full truth is that much remains to be done. There is no room for any complacency in that regard.

As part of the follow-up to implementation, the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which I have the honour to chair, last year took up the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation, with special attention devoted to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). The Working Group held a joint meeting with major troop-contributing countries, to which the Chairman of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Ambassador Wali of Nigeria, was also invited. That invitation to the Chairman of the Committee of 34, which he accepted, was intended to develop better coordination and a complementary working relationship between the subsidiary body of the Security Council and the General Assembly in the handling of DPKO issues.

That meeting included an update by DPKO and troop-contributing countries regarding how the measures to prevent cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in MONUC were being implemented. There was an active exchange of views at the meeting about how those measures should be improved further. I felt that it was a useful exercise. The Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operation stands ready to be proactive in providing impetus, as necessary, to the implementation of preventive and remedial measures.

The international community expects high standards of responsibility and discipline on the part of troops and staff deployed to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Every peacekeeper deployed and every troop-, police- and civilian-contributing country is expected to maintain high moral, ethical and professional standards while serving under the flag of the United Nations. In most situations they have lived up to those high expectations, and they deserve praise for their dedication and hard work — which they frequently carry out in difficult circumstances, in the course of which the ultimate sacrifice has sometimes been required.

Unfortunately, however, the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping operations has been tarnished by serious allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation due to the misbehaviour of some. Again, the issue of improper procurement practices and allegations of fraud and mismanagement in procurement services related to peacekeeping operations have come to undermine the credibility of peacekeeping operations. I do not envy Jean-Marie Guéhenno his position in the last few days. However, we must spare no effort in correcting the wrongs and overcoming the weaknesses in the system, thereby restoring the good name of United Nations peacekeeping operations by taking all the necessary measures with the same rigour and in a spirit of zero-tolerance. Nothing less will be acceptable to Member States.

I would like to conclude by stating that DPKO has the full support of my delegation in its further efforts.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to commend and thank the President for the holding this public meeting. We believe that discussing the issue that was the subject of debate at a meeting yesterday and the matter under consideration today should indeed take place in public, in order that the entire world may be aware of what occurs at the United Nations. In other words, we should ensure that we truly apply transparency to the work of the Security Council, which is something we often talk about but rarely want to do.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the briefings given by Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel. Their presentations were both clear and detailed as regards the matter under consideration.

Argentina has always condemned cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, which bring discredit and dishonour upon the laudable goals of peacekeeping operations. The international community must be resolute in repudiating sexual abuse and exploitation, while at the same time continuing to support peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts in countries suffering from conflict. We therefore believe that, bearing in mind the complex environment in which peacekeeping operations take place, the United Nations

must put in place consistent and specific controls aimed at preventing and punishing cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as ensuring that no allegation goes uninvestigated.

Our country resolutely follows, and will continue to adhere to, the timely zero-tolerance policy launched by the Secretary-General. That policy should enjoy the necessary reach and be promoted widely throughout national and regional training centres for Blue Helmets.

In that connection, we would particularly like to emphasize the usefulness of the report prepared by Prince Zeid, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations. We would like to thank him for the interest and dedication he has devoted to this matter. As was the case with his report last year, this year's report will make an extremely important contribution to the deliberations of the Special Committee for Peacekeeping Operations. We recall that the Committee has developed a series of recommendations to enable the Secretariat to address this problem. We are pleased to note that many of those recommendations have already been put in practice.

We believe that there must be a comprehensive approach to address this issue. That approach must involve every agency on the ground. As we know, agency personnel have, unfortunately, in some cases also been responsible for committing these abuses. Moreover, the system's response must also be comprehensive and exhaustive.

With regard to rules and regulations, it is important to standardize criteria and clearly disseminate the standards of conduct expected of Blue Helmets. In that connection, it seems to us that combining three texts into a unified whole is a good step on the part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Every effort must be made to translate that text into all official languages and the majority of languages represented by troop-contributing countries. Doing so would contribute to greater dissemination and understanding of the desired objectives.

Similarly, we think that the proposal to modify the text of the 1997 memorandum of understanding of is a welcome initiative, whose goal is to better define the type of behaviour expected of contingents, as well as the specific responsibilities of troop-contributing countries.

It is important to implement measures that emphasize existing responsibilities in the areas of organization, management and command, as well as to improve access to recreational activities for troops.

With regard to punishing abuse, it seems to us essential for there to be clear terms of reference for the carrying out of investigations. It is also necessary that the basic principles of due process be respected at all times. Troop-contributing countries must be responsible in their action so that proven crimes do not go unpunished.

Lastly, in saying that there must be a comprehensive approach to dealing with this matter, we mean that there must also be a speedy and effective strategy to provide assistance to victims. That must include access to reproductive health services, psychological care, counselling, administrative and legal support and, as appropriate, financial compensation.

We believe that, in the context of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the General Assembly has a crucial role to play in the debate on this issue and in the taking of decisions on the matter. We hope that the Organization, through the General Assembly, will be able to take the urgent action that this problem requires and that we will see a gradual reduction in the recurrence of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, since the latter cast a shadow of suspicion on the vital contribution of peacekeeping operations to international coexistence.

There is no doubt that that the majority of men and women who serve in such operations do so with great altruism, professionalism and courage, even, on occasion, sacrificing their lives in the cause of peace. For their sake, and to honour the memory of all those who have fallen in the line of duty, we must resolutely condemn and put an end to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: First of all, I should like, on behalf of Qatar, to thank the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, and His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for their briefings.

Qatar attaches great importance to this matter and to the serious accusations of breaches of conduct and acts of sexual violence on the part of peacekeeping contingents. We vigorously condemn such actions, which are shameful, unjustifiable and unacceptable, especially given that they target vulnerable persons — the very persons we are supposed to be protecting.

Secondly, such actions sully the reputation of peacekeeping operations, which are vital, as well as that of the Organization — a very serious matter indeed. We must study all of the various aspects of this phenomenon and consult with the troop-contributing countries so that we can put an end to all such violations and breaches of conduct.

We must do so with the appropriate resources and within the general framework of the United Nations. We need to conduct investigations and adduce evidence in cases of sexual exploitation, and impose the appropriate sanctions. The participation and cooperation of the troop-contributing countries is, of course, pivotal to the success of this undertaking.

When a peacekeeping operation is established by the Council, instructions and training must be given to its personnel, and the gravity of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse must be made clear. We must sensitize contingents to United Nations standards in this area. We need also to draw on Prince Zeid's report as well as on the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations with respect to cases of sexual abuse and to establish ethical-conduct teams within the United Nations. We should also create a climate and a culture on the ground that does not tolerate this type of abuse.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to those who have fallen during peacekeeping operations for having fulfilled their mission — those faithful soldiers of the United Nations. We must not allow a few incidents to cast a shadow on the lofty peacekeeping mission of the United Nations.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish at the outset to thank Mr. Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his latest report on sexual exploitation and abuse. We thank also His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel, for his briefing on the issue as a follow-up to his previous report to the Council in May last year.

It is logical for the Security Council, as a body that defines and authorizes peacekeeping missions, to be seized of issues that hamper the operations of such missions. Sexual exploitation and abuse is one of those cross-cutting issues which demand a cross-mandated coordinated response.

We therefore align ourselves with the statement of the African Union, to be made later by the Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone.

We acknowledge the good work undertaken by peacekeeping personnel, but we are concerned that the unethical behaviour of some personnel is tarnishing the image and reputation of peacekeeping operations and that of the United Nations as whole. Sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel represent a breach of trust vis-a-vis the local population and host Governments, which the peacekeepers are sent to protect and serve. The issues at stake involve not only a breach of trust with respect to the hosts but also the reputation of troop-contributing countries.

The report, entitled "A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations", by the Adviser to the Secretary-General, His Highness Prince Zeid, discusses this issue in depth and offers very good recommendations. The challenge we now face is to put an end to such acts and then prevent them from happening again. In that regard, we welcome the various measures that are being taken and urge their mainstreaming in the management culture of the United Nations, in training modules and in the professional code of conduct for the United Nations and troop-contributing countries.

As we take measures to end sexual exploitation and abuse by our peacekeeping personnel, we need also to understand the underlying factors that make communities vulnerable to such exploitation and abuse in conflict areas. The demeaning nature of poverty and deprivation must be addressed concurrently as peace operations continue. We believe that this is one of the areas that the Peacebuilding Commission should address when it becomes operational.

We must also understand the psychological and social impact of conflict on affected societies which

are exploited by deviant elements and make an effort also to understand the cultural and national sensitivities of receiving Governments and communities as we prepare peacekeeping mandates. Each peacekeeping mission has its own unique characteristics, which should be understood and respected. Sensitization programmes for peacekeepers ought to be integral and continuous components in integrated peacekeeping missions.

While we appreciate the difficulties involved in investigating allegations of sexual misconduct, we wish to urge all that such allegations continue to be duly investigated and reported. More work is needed to synchronize the United Nations ethics and administration guidelines with the judicial systems of host countries and troop-contributing countries.

In that regard, we wish to reiterate the importance of increasing the percentage of women in peacekeeping operations to facilitate awareness campaigns and confidence-building among vulnerable groups. We need also to remind ourselves of our obligation to increase the role of women in conflict management and resolution, as per resolution 1325 (2000).

Finally, let me reiterate my Government's strong condemnation of all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse and its support for the Secretary-General's "zero tolerance" policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

There should also be a "zero complacency" and a "zero impunity" approach to this issue, to borrow phrases that were used in Mr. Mark Malloch Brown's presentation yesterday on the related issue of procurement fraud in peacekeeping operations.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I would like to thank both the Secretariat and Prince Zeid for their briefings today on this matter. In particular, I would like to commend Prince Zeid for the important work he has done as the Secretary-General's Special Adviser to shine light on what is arguably one of the greatest stains on United Nations history. It is absolutely unacceptable that horrific crimes of sexual abuse and exploitation have been committed by United Nations peacekeepers against individuals they have been assigned to protect.

Having an open briefing on this subject is important because, while we rightly express our moral outrage, we must take firm and decisive action. We must take action now, not only to pursue justice and a resolution to the crimes that have already been committed, but also to establish the necessary institutions, mechanisms, training and oversight procedures to ensure they are not repeated in existing and future peacekeeping operations. We cannot wait months and years while more children are exploited and the reputation of United Nations peacekeepers continues to decline.

Failure to act on this matter will have profound implications for both existing and future peacekeeping missions. As we begin to plan our next operation in Darfur, we do not want to contemplate potential headlines of United Nations peacekeepers in Darfur raping the very population that they are entrusted to protect. We concur in full with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno when he remarked last May that,

> "Indeed, it is precisely our image and reputation that gives us the credibility to work so effectively in war-torn countries and bring peace and stability to millions across the world. Eliminating such misconduct is therefore integral to the success of peacekeeping". (*S/PV.5191, p. 5*)

Throughout our wide-ranging discussions on a variety of issues related to United Nations reform, we have spoken of the need for a fundamental change in the culture and the way the United Nations operates. We have heard Paul Volcker, Chairman of the Commission investigating the oil-for-food scandal, speak of a culture of inaction. Just yesterday, we discussed the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) report on Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) procurement, where OIOS spoke of a culture of impunity.

Resolution and prevention of future acts of sexual exploitation and abuse call for the same fundamental shift. We are pleased that the Secretariat acknowledges this point, with Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno remarking that,

> "We need to create a culture and environment in peacekeeping operations that does not permit sexual exploitation and abuse. This requires joint action by both DPKO and Member States". (ibid, p. 7)

The United States, for its part, takes its responsibility as a Member State seriously in this regard. We are working closely with others to finalize language in the

new, amended Memorandum of Understanding issued by DPKO last fall and encourage other troop-contributing countries to do so as well.

The United States Congress has expressed keen interest in this matter and has taken action. In 2005, Congress passed and President Bush signed the 2005 re-authorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. This new legislation requires the Executive Branch, starting in June 2006, to report annually to the United States Congress on the actions taken by the United Nations and other international organizations to prevent trafficking and sexual exploitation and abuse by employees, contractors and peacekeeping forces. It also requires the Secretary of State to report to the United States Congress on the effectiveness of those actions prior to voting on any new or re-authorized peacekeeping mission.

The United States Government has also taken action on an important matter closely linked to the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse at the hands of peacekeepers, namely, the spread of HIV. We have fully supported, and will continue to support, Security Council resolution 1308 (2000). The United States Department of Defense, and more recently the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, have provided resources and technical assistance to implement long-term strategies for HIV/AIDS education, prevention, counselling, testing and treatment in more than 70 military and peacekeeping populations around the world. Since the adoption of resolution 1308 (2000), the United States has assisted with the HIV/AIDS education of over two million uniformed personnel, trained 7,000 uniformed peer educators, established more than 200 HIV/AIDS counselling and testing facilities on or near military bases, provided HIV/AIDS diagnostic and screening equipment to 30 armed forces and trained over 600 uniformed medical personnel in the care and treatment of HIV-infected personnel and their families.

We strongly endorse the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping to strengthen enforcement of a uniform United Nations code of conduct for peacekeepers, improve the capacity of the United Nations, in cooperation with troop-contributing countries, to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, establish assistance to and compensation for victims and enhance pre- and post-deployment training for United Nations peacekeepers. We also welcome the creation of personal conduct units within the United Nations missions in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Sudan to address allegations and assist victims. We feel it is critical that all United Nations missions include similar units in each of their respective fields. We will strongly encourage other United Nations Security Council members to continue to support the inclusion in United Nations Security Council resolutions establishing peacekeeping operations specific and strong language to that end. Finally, we take special note of DPKO efforts to increase the participation of female uniformed personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We are concerned, however, about the status and progress of the investigations into past cases of abuse. We understand that the Office of Internal Oversight Services took over all investigations as of last October and is expected to issue a report this May. We expect that DPKO will cooperate fully with OIOS in its investigations of past abuses and in providing access to all information on new allegations as they surface. We know this is a daunting task and that OIOS has only begun to scratch the surface of this problem. To date, the United Nations has investigated 295 cases, resulting in 137 repatriations and 16 dismissals of soldiers, commanders, police and United Nations staff. It is also critical that OIOS operate with complete autonomy to investigate these matters. This will help all parts of the Organization by insulating it from accusations of trying to cover up the scope and magnitude of the problem.

I note that OIOS is absent today, as it was absent yesterday, and we find this troubling. I note also that the Secretary-General's Chief of Staff did not answer my question yesterday on the independence of OIOS, and we find that troubling as well. We intend to pursue these matters.

All of these vitally needed reforms by the United Nations must be matched by resolve on the part of troop-contributing countries to prevent and punish crimes by their personnel who participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Pre- and post-deployment training, compliance, adequate living standards for troops, discipline and compensation for victims require commitment and action by troop-contributing countries.

We understand that no system will be perfect, and there will be instances that require Member States to prosecute their citizens in their own courts. For those countries that have repatriated alleged perpetrators of these heinous crimes, we encourage them in the strongest terms to follow the lead of countries such as Morocco and be transparent and forthright in their judicial proceedings. The international community expects no less. We know this is not always an easy task, but it is an important one.

It was two years ago that the world began to wake up to the reality that we are confronted with today — that the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children at the hands of United Nations peacekeepers is not an isolated incident. It is a widespread scourge that creates lasting victims, scarred for their lifetimes. The "boys will be boys" attitude, which too long pervaded peacekeeping operations, must correctly be met with a zero tolerance policy. Now that we are aware of this problem, though, it is time to take this recognition and translate it into decisive action without delay. We should do so not just because we recognize the impact of such crimes on the success of a particular mission, but because it is our moral and ethical responsibility to do as much as possible to prevent the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children, wherever it may exist.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Brazil. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I wish to express Brazil's deepest concern and repudiation with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Misconduct by those who are expected to bring peace and justice to countries emerging from conflict and civil strife cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. This is a highly sensitive issue that United Nations Member States themselves must address urgently and in a comprehensive manner in the proper forum. At the same time, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to the great majority of members of peacekeeping missions who carry out their duties in a way that properly reflects the noble aims of the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations.

It is well known that the General Assembly is the only organ with universal representation that has competence to make recommendations with regard to general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe it inappropriate for the Security Council to engage in actual lawmaking.

Brazil attaches great importance to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We believe that measures have to be taken before, during and after deployment. In our view, the United Nations could play a more active role in the training of troops, even before deployment. Prevention, a solid doctrine and comprehensive training are essential in order to avoid sexual misconduct.

On the ground, instructions should always be clear, so that peacekeepers are made well aware of the kind of behaviour that is expected from them and of the consequences of their acts. We stress the need to consolidate a precise set of rules and an effective mechanism for proper investigation and punishment, as well as to maintain the availability of an efficient reporting channel. The three available documents related to the rules of conduct for peacekeepers, valuable as they are, overlap in many respects and do not bring enough clarity to the issue. Therefore, it seems appropriate to establish a set of binding rules that are clear, concise and consistent.

Brazil shares the view that the incorporation of standards of conduct for peacekeepers into a memorandum of understanding is a positive step, provided that troop-contributing countries retain exclusive jurisdiction over their contingents. We must bear in mind, however, that a memorandum of understanding is an instrument that binds only the two or more parties directly involved in its subscription. In view of that, it would be appropriate for the discussion and eventual adoption of a model memorandum of understanding to be accompanied by other measures by the General Assembly, including the adoption of relevant resolutions and the addition of legal documents. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations should continue to discuss and urgently adopt a comprehensive and coherent strategy for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

It is important to implement the decisions taken earlier in 2005 by the General Assembly on this issue, on the basis of the discussions held in the Special Committee concerning the report released by the

Secretary-General containing the recommendations of his Special Adviser on the matter, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. Every senior authority in peacekeeping missions must be ready to take action in the event of allegations related to sexual exploitation and abuse.

In the case of military personnel, commanders must make a firm commitment to act in a decisive manner whenever there are indications of abuse on the part of their troops. Investigations should be impartial and should respect the principle of due process of law so that alleged offenders can have the chance to present their side of the case. In those cases in which judicial proceedings become necessary, the alleged offenders should be immediately repatriated to their countries of origin to face proceedings. The outcome of the exercise should enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the relevant national authorities in the fight against sexual crimes.

Those considerations should be applied mutatis mutandis to the three components of peacekeeping operations, namely, civilian, military and police personnel. It is not appropriate for each of those components to follow a substantively different set of rules on the same issue.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Singapore. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to address the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. I would also like to express my gratitude to my friend, the Ambassador of Jordan, and to Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno for their comprehensive briefings. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the diligence of the thousands of peacekeepers who stand the line with courage and honour. These men and women are a credit to the principles of peace and humanitarianism. They have become integral to helping many countries recover from post-conflict situations.

Against that backdrop, it is tragic to hear of continued reports and allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct by some individuals. The Secretary-General himself has admitted that although progress has been made in eliminating exploitation and abuse, not all managers, commanders and other personnel are vigorously pursuing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy. That is a moral outrage. People in war-torn lands see Blue Helmets and expect their lives to improve. That hope is the single greatest compliment that they can pay to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). It arises from the Department's reputation for effectiveness and its strong record of achievement. So when there is sexual abuse, it is a total betrayal of trust.

Please do not misunderstand me; I do not say this with any intention to embarrass DPKO. I acknowledge the Department's crucial role in managing and resolving conflicts. I say this because it pains me to see a small minority sully the reputation of the dedicated majority. To save the main body, we need to deal with this cancer, this minority, without remorse.

To my delegation, it boils down to three critical issues. The first is clear accountability and punishment. The United Nations cannot champion the concept of the rule of law while its peacekeepers break the law. The fact that these abuses have been going on without censure for a long time is especially unacceptable. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and commanders have to send a message to the units and entities under their command that such behaviour is intolerable. Just as each peacekeeper will be held accountable for his or her actions, commanders and senior staff will also be held accountable for the misconduct of personnel under their command. Accountability must be applied fairly and across the board. Transgressors must be dealt with swiftly and consistently. By the same token, commanders and senior staff must be given the requisite unified commands if we expect them to address this problem.

The second issue is the need for a system-wide approach. Peacekeeping operations are the domain of multiple actors, given the complexity of policing conflict situations. The challenge is to find common procedures and to coordinate between disparate agencies such as the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Public Information, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. That would help us to avoid the duplication of responsibilities and to ensure the effective deployment of resources.

Permit me to cite the example of conduct and discipline units. Recently, several such units were formed. However, their roles remain insufficiently understood by peacekeepers on the ground. The

confusion is perhaps exacerbated by the presence of child protection advisers and gender advisers already in field missions. We need to be mindful of possible overlap and duplication of functions. In terms of deployment, we were surprised to hear that a conduct and discipline unit had been appointed for Timor-Leste. With the termination of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor, would it not have been better to send that unit to another mission?

Thirdly, we need to evaluate the efficacy of our measures and to question whether we have provided ourselves with enough tools to root out the problem. For example, do we have more responsive investigation capacity by OIOS compared with previous investigations by DPKO? Are the new investigators better trained to deal with sexual crimes? How can so many investigations be pending? Does that mean we have insufficient investigative and prosecution capability? Do we need to look into accountability? What tools do our Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and military commanders have for monitoring problems on the ground? Do we need more?

A preliminary look at available data suggests that the number of allegations increased in 2005. My delegation urges DPKO to analyse this data and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures introduced over the past 12 months. The damage to the image of peacekeepers and DPKO must be repaired. With clear accountability, optimization of resources and a tough, clear-headed approach, we can do this. Our dedicated peacekeepers deserve no less.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Marschik (Austria): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the other countries aligning themselves with this statement.

In trying to help the Council make the best use of its time, I should like to draw attention to my delegation's written statement, copies of which are being distributed; I shall limit myself to a number of salient points.

It is deeply regrettable that the United Nations has had to confront instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel. It is tragic that the shameful misconduct of a few should detract from the vital contribution to peace and security made by the women and men serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The credibility of the United Nations and the viability of United Nations peacekeeping operations is undermined by such appalling behaviour. It is imperative that this scourge be stamped out.

The European Union has supported from the beginning the strong stance taken by the Secretary-General on this issue, including his initiative in appointing an Adviser on the question of sexual exploitation and abuse, Prince Zeid of Jordan. The EU has been encouraged by the sense of urgency shared by the members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations last year following publication of the report prepared by Prince Zeid (A/59/710). Last April the Special Committee made a number of recommendations for urgent action, addressed to the Secretary-General, to the Secretariat and to Member States themselves. The central theme underlying those recommendations is the need to establish and implement a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In May last year (see S/PV.5191), the Security Council added further momentum to these efforts when it welcomed the Special Committee's report (A/59/19/Add.1) and called on the Secretary-General and on troop-contributing countries to ensure implementation of the recommendations without delay. The Security Council also set itself the task of considering inclusion of provisions on prevention, monitoring, investigation and reporting of misconduct cases in its own resolutions concerning peacekeeping mandates. We are pleased to see that the Council has since acted along those lines on several occasions.

The European Union welcomes the opportunity offered by today's meeting to press for renewed efforts to ensure speedy implementation of all outstanding recommendations from the Special Committee's report. The time line for full implementation of those recommendations — no later than 1 June 2007 — must be respected.

As regards achievements to date, the EU is pleased to see that the Secretariat has already taken some of the steps that fall within its purview and has set in train measures to implement others. The EU welcomes the Secretariat's work on a revised draft model memorandum

of understanding for troop contributors and hopes that these efforts will lead to its adoption by the General Assembly before the end of its sixtieth session. The EU is also pleased to see the progress on establishing a professional and independent investigative capacity in the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). It is crucial that effective cooperation be assured between OIOS and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The EU encourages collaboration between troop-contributing countries and the OIOS investigative capacity in order to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in the relevant national jurisdiction. That is vital in the fight against impunity for acts of misconduct.

Given the importance of keeping the interests of the victims, female and male, adults and children, at the forefront of all these efforts, the EU also warmly welcomes the Secretariat's progress in developing a bold and comprehensive policy on support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. We look forward to discussion on this in the upcoming session of the Special Committee. Likewise, the EU strongly supports the establishment of a sufficient number of conduct and discipline teams to meet the need for such capacity in peacekeeping missions, and it favours the transformation of the present Headquarters team into a permanent conduct and discipline unit in DPKO, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report.

High standards of conduct and discipline must be applied to all categories of peacekeeping personnel. A particular responsibility rests with us, the Member States, to train, to prepare and to hold accountable members of national contingents, including at the very senior level.

The EU has taken measures to ensure that there is a policy of zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel participating in its own European Security and Defence Policy operations. Though individual EU member States retain jurisdiction over their national troop and police contingents, the European Union has taken steps to standardize the norms of behaviour for all categories of personnel participating in such operations. Moreover, those generic standards clarify the responsibilities of senior commanders and management, require their incorporation into the planning documents of every operation under the European Security and Defence Policy, call for the establishment of complaint procedures and reporting mechanisms and require the inclusion of education on the standards of behaviour into national as well as EU-level pre-deployment training.

None of us should become complacent on a subject as serious as this. The EU remains fully committed to intensifying its efforts, and it encourages the wider United Nations membership and the Secretariat to remain so as well.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rock (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada welcomes the opportunity to speak on this important subject. This debate demonstrates how seriously the United Nations and its Member States take the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. While we consider primary consideration of the issue should remain with the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, where it most is appropriately carried out, we agree that the Security Council should be seized of this issue, and in that regard we welcome today's debate.

Sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions is among the most appalling forms of breach of trust. It diminishes us all. It undermines the United Nations as an institution. It causes incalculable harm to some of the most vulnerable people in the world. And although these crimes are committed by a small number of individuals, their abuse taints the loyal and professional service of our valiant United Nations peacekeepers, who daily put their lives at risk for others.

(*spoke in English*)

Over the past year, the Secretary-General and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) have made considerable efforts to ensure that progress is made on the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Canada strongly supports the measures taken by the Secretary-General to implement a policy of zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence.

Significant steps have now been taken to bring alleged abusers to account. As of October 2005, more than 221 suspects from among peacekeeping forces had been investigated, 10 civilians had been fired and more than 88 uniformed personnel had been repatriated. The establishment of conduct and discipline units in some peacekeeping missions and at United Nations Headquarters is a very positive development. But the

policy and the measures taken by the Secretary-General will succeed only if we, as Member States, take appropriate steps to ensure that our personnel deployed on peace operations are appropriately trained and are held to the highest standards of conduct and discipline. We look forward to the day when troop-contributing countries incorporate training on sexual exploitation and abuse in their pre-deployment training programmes.

We welcome the excellent and comprehensive report (A/59/710) delivered by our colleague the Permanent Representative of Jordan, Prince Zeid, a report that is a tangible demonstration of the desire of the United Nations to proactively follow through on the Secretary-General's commitment on this very issue. As a follow-up to Prince Zeid's report, DPKO has proposed a number of measures, including in particular: the requirement that public information campaigns be undertaken to combat the culture of acceptance which has developed in peacekeeping missions; and the furnishing of support to the empowerment of local women and girls. That latter recommendation is critical if those women and girls are to be in a position to protect themselves from sexual exploitation and to seek redress when it occurs.

As Under-Secretary-General Jean-Marie Guehenno stated this past October during the Council's open debate on resolution 1325 (2000),

> "Beyond pointing to a series of systemic weaknesses that account for such gross misconduct, [the] problem [of sexual exploitation and abuse] should be a wake-up call for all of us to attach even more importance to incorporating a gender perspective into our work." (*S/PV.5294, p. 5*)

Canada would add that we must also closely examine how we can collectively agree on further implementation mechanisms — which may take a little longer to fully develop — and on how best we can support them. We strongly support the continued work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations on this important issue at its upcoming session. We encourage the Committee to support the initiative of national investigation officers put forward by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), including the methodology for strong, direct and transparent action, while ensuring that national judicial processes are respected. We believe that it is imperative that early advice be given to a Member State when an allegation has been made against one or more of its personnel so that swift and effective action can be taken to investigate the allegation and to punish those convicted of these crimes. We are confident that the Special Committee will provide further options to implement the Secretary-General's policy and Prince Zeid's insightful report.

For our part, Canada will ensure that the military, police and civilian personnel sent by our Government on United Nations missions are well trained, professional and fully aware of their responsibilities and of the codes of conduct. We know that all countries represented in this Chamber share the same objective: to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We will achieve that goal only if all troop-contributing countries ensure that the highest training standards are followed.

We have heard time and time again of the so-called wall of silence with which Prince Zeid and his team have been met when broaching the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. This wall of silence has kept many abuse cases from being investigated. The work of the Secretary-General, the work of DPKO, the recommendations of OIOS, the work of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping and the endeavours of troop-contributing countries over the past year have shown that, when we are mobilized, change can take place. That change must continue, because sexual and gender-based violence continues to threaten women's human rights and sustainable peace and security. Our rapid and effective action has never been more critically needed.

Let us therefore commit ourselves anew to vigorous and focused action, so that we can protect those in vulnerable situations from abuse and exploitation and restore the reputation of the United Nations, and of all who represent it, for integrity and for honourable behaviour.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Guéhenno: I want to begin by thanking the Security Council and all Member States for their strong support and engagement on a very important issue. Without a steady, long-term, persistent commitment, we will not resolve that issue. For our part, we will continue to pursue this effort aggressively. As we pursue it aggressively, more allegations will surface;

that is an unpleasant part of having the kind of transparency that we want to have so that investigations can be held when they are needed. There, we will work closely with the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). We hope that OIOS will get all the resources it needs to develop these investigations so that no stone is left unturned, so that every effort can be made, so that there will be follow-up, so that there will be no impunity and so that there will be accountability.

I want to say a word on the two challenges that have occupied the Council yesterday and today: the challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse and the challenge related to procurement. I believe that the challenge of sexual exploitation and abuse is actually a more daunting one, because what we are facing there is essentially a change of culture that goes far beyond the United Nations: it affects all societies and all armies around the world. That is why the effort has to include a strong partnership between the Secretariat and Member States.

The challenge related to procurement is a more complex one, for two reasons: first, because there are issues of possible fraud, mismanagement and inadequate rules; and secondly, because this is a cross-cutting issue. While the issue of fraud has to be dealt with aggressively by OIOS, pursuing its investigations, the questions of mismanagement and of inadequate rules involve two departments: the Department of Management as the central actor in the procurement process, with its procurement office; and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, because we define the needs that then lead to contracts managed by the Department of Management. That is why we have to work closely together. I am encouraged to see how, at this stage, the two departments are working closely together to address this challenge.

Finally, let me say a word to Ambassador Oshima, who was kind enough to say that he did not envy me. I would say that when one goes to a mission — and I will be travelling to a mission in a few days' time — one sees the expectations of the people there and sees the difference that the peacekeepers are making on the ground. I think the difficulties that we face are part of the effort that needs to be undertaken to strengthen this vital instrument of peacekeeping. So it may be hard; it may sometimes be unpleasant; and when we receive news of sexual exploitation and abuse or possible fraud it hurts us deeply. But at the same time, when one sees the difference that is being made on the ground, one thinks it is worth all the effort.

The President: I give the floor to His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein to respond to comments and questions raised.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein: I too am grateful to you, Mr. President, and to all those who took the floor this morning for the kind remarks addressed to my team and to me.

I, too, welcome the many constructive thoughts and observations presented this morning by all my colleagues who spoke, all of which will serve us well as we press on in our work in the context of the deliberations currently taking place in the General Assembly.

The representatives of the Congo and Brazil mentioned the acute sensitivities that ordinarily accompany any discussion of this subject. I can attest that, five years ago, this sort of debate would have been absolutely impossible, and so I pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Denmark for having arranged the Council's first formal meeting dedicated to this subject last year. Yet, while a presidential statement was issued on that occasion, the members of the Council refrained from taking the floor individually. And so, under your guidance, Sir, we are breaking new ground.

That is welcome, for we must on occasion have an open and responsible discussion of this troubling subject in all forums within the United Nations system and without prejudice to the General Assembly's leading role on this. Again, Sir, I thank you and the members of the Council for devoting some of your valuable time and your much-appreciated thoughts to this crucial subject.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.